

They will be here as late as they need to be. By 10:30 tomorrow morning we should be able to move to amendments, have debate on those where there is additional debate needed; hopefully, start any votes by 12:15 and finish the amendment process before both sides break for lunch. It would be my hope we could come back right after lunch, with the leader agreements, and have passage on the child care and development block grant bill.

Let me just say, Mr. President, that I want to thank Chairman HARKIN, Ranking Member ALEXANDER and Senator MIKULSKI. I think we have gone into this and we have tried to urge our colleagues, if they can make this bill better, to come to the floor and to do that. I think we have seen, by the action of people who have done this in a responsible way, that we have worked in a bipartisan way to make sure we could present to the Members of the Senate amendments that didn't cause a great deal of concern, and, in fact, they did improve the bill.

So I encourage my colleagues to file those amendments tonight, to be prepared to finish this bill before the middle of the afternoon tomorrow, and we can expect to have a successful passage of this bill.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. First, Mr. President, I concur in everything the Senator from North Carolina just said. This is a very good bill. It is a great bill. The Senator from North Carolina has put a lot into this bill over the last couple of years, and we are close to seeing the finish line. So I hope Senators and their staffs who may not be present but who are watching will do just as the Senator suggested. If they have amendments, get them over to the floor tonight during morning business; we will take those up, our staffs can work those out, and, hopefully, we will be on track to finish the bill tomorrow.

Again, I thank the Senator from North Carolina for all the hard work he has put in over a long period of time.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider the Landrieu amendment No. 2818 be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business until 7 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the bipartisan Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her great leadership, Senator BURR for his leadership, and Senators HARKIN and ALEXANDER. We have had a great afternoon.

We also had a number of people confirmed today, which I am very pleased about, including the Ambassador to Canada. I think it is pretty important we have an ambassador to Canada because Canada is our biggest trading partner. We haven't had one now for months, and this is a very good outcome.

But back to the bill. It has been almost 20 years since the Senate last reauthorized CCDBG. Since that time we have learned if we want strong communities, a robust workforce, and students who are ahead of the curve, we need to ensure that every child has access to high-quality childcare.

As the country's primary Federal childcare program, CCDBG provides millions of families with the assistance they need to ensure working parents can keep their jobs or finish schooling knowing their children are safe and receiving quality care. We know that a child's early years are critical to building a strong foundation for their lives. Up to 90 percent of brain development happens before age 5. Just think about that: 90 percent of brain development happens before age 5. That is why it is so important to invest in quality care and education. When we do, it pays off for the rest of us by giving us better informed citizens and a more productive workforce.

Investments in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program also give parents the option of affordable childcare. Research indicates that higher childcare costs have a negative impact on a mother's employment because women are more likely to leave their jobs when childcare costs are high. That can have a lasting negative impact on families' finances and women's future earnings.

As the Senate chair of the Joint Economic Committee, I released a report last year that looked at the critical role mothers play in the financial well-being of their families. My report found that lower income families are especially dependent on the money earned by mothers who work outside the home. In families in the lowest 10 percent of the income distribution, mothers account for over half of family income. The high price of childcare these days—it averages over \$14,000 each year for two children—means the child care and development block grant assistance makes a big difference between families rising into the middle class or falling further behind.

Working families across the country are counting on us to get this done. Since the child care and development block grant was last reauthorized in

1996, families have seen the cost of childcare increase while access to quality care has become more difficult to find.

This bipartisan legislation would provide the opportunity for Congress to make critical improvements to the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program to ensure that children are safe and healthy in their childcare setting, that families have access to quality programs, and that States have a coordinated system of early care and education for children from birth to age 13.

One of the primary updates in the 2014 reauthorization is the requirement that all childcare providers receiving this assistance must go through comprehensive background checks. It is unbelievable that currently only 13 States require comprehensive background checks for childcare providers. We have had a number of incidents in our State where children have had tragic injuries and tragic ends because of the lack of background checks. As a former prosecutor, I saw firsthand how abuse harmed young children, tore families apart, and challenged local law enforcement agencies, our court system, and our social service and health care providers. Our kids deserve better. We need to do everything we can to make sure people caring for our kids undergo comprehensive background checks before receiving child care and development block grants.

The bill also requires States to conduct regular health and safety inspections of the childcare settings so we can make sure kids are learning and developing in safe environments.

The legislation cuts redtape by giving families more flexibility around enrollment procedures.

These changes will not only strengthen the program's integrity but also improve transparency so that the 1.5 million children being served through this program every month get the best care possible.

Raising the next generation has always been a difficult job, and it has never been more expensive. The future of our Nation rests on making sure parents have the support they need to give their children a strong start.

I urge the Senate to reauthorize this bipartisan bill and ensure children and working families get the quality care and education they need to thrive. It is the best investment we can make.

I see the Senator from North Carolina Mr. BURR just came in. I thank him for his great work not only on this bill but also in allowing for this amendment process, which I believe is very important for the future of the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about two amendments I will call up on S. 1086, the child care and development block grant bill. The first one I will speak to is amendment No.

2834, which Senator MURKOWSKI and I are offering in relation to tribal childcare facilities.

As my colleagues know, I recently took over as chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and 2 weeks ago I held my first hearing. This hearing focused on early childhood development and education in Indian Country. This hearing was timely, as some of the testimony the committee received related to the child care and development block grant. At that hearing a childcare program director from the White Earth Nation—who is also the chair of the National Indian Child Care Association—testified about the needs of her program and the needs of all Indian childcare providers. One of the needs she highlighted was improving the condition of tribal childcare facilities in Indian Country.

According to the Administration for Children and Families, of the 260 Indian tribe or tribal organizations that receive CCDBG funds, only 14 of them constructed new tribal childcare facilities in the last 10 years.

In an effort to improve and replace facilities, my amendment allows tribes more flexibility in the use of their grant funds. Renovation and construction of tribal facilities is already an allowable activity under this legislation, but the law explicitly states that Indian tribes or tribal organizations cannot reduce services—even temporarily—to improve or replace their facilities.

This amendment allows the Secretary to grant a waiver to an Indian tribe or tribal organization, permitting them to temporarily reduce services if they can prove the outcome will improve capacity or improve services as a result of the construction. It is a simple, commonsense amendment that will improve the quality of life in Indian Country, and I urge its adoption when it comes up.

I will now speak to amendment No. 2835. Under current law, a parent who suffers the tragedy of the death of a child has to rely on their employer's compassion for time off to grieve. Many times this is not an issue. There are thousands of compassionate employers out there who give parents the space they need. But not everyone is so fortunate. Some folks who just aren't ready to come back after a few days end up having to choose between returning to work while struggling with the aftermath of their child's death or losing their job.

This amendment would fix the Family and Medical Leave Act to include the death of a child as a trigger for benefits provided under the FMLA. The FMLA currently allows parents to take time off to care for a child battling a serious health issue. But children between the ages of 1 and 14 are more than twice as likely to die suddenly from an accident than from cancer, flu, and pneumonia combined.

The FMLA protects parents who are caring for their children; it should sup-

port parents who are grieving for their children as well. This is a small amendment, but it will mean so much to parents who suffer the unimaginable loss of a child. I urge my colleagues to stand for compassion, and I urge adoption of this amendment when it is brought up.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise somewhat reluctantly today to speak about an intelligence committee matter.

Allegations in the past 24 hours have been discussed rampantly in the halls of Congress and in the press. Based on press reports today, yesterday, and even last week, allegations have been made regarding the Central Intelligence Agency's actions toward the committee, as well as staff and Members' actions on the Senate intelligence committee toward the CIA.

The reason I feel compelled to speak on this matter is the following: Although people speak as though we know all of the pertinent facts surrounding this matter, the truth is we do not. The Republican committee members on the Senate intelligence committee and staff were not involved in the underlying investigation of the detainee and interrogation report. We do not know the actual facts concerning the CIA's alleged actions or all of the specific details about the actions by the committee staff regarding the draft of what is now referred to as the "Panetta internal review document."

Both parties involved have made allegations against one another and have even speculated as to each other's actions, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions that must be addressed. No forensics have been run on the CIA computers—or, as my colleagues refer to them, "the SSCI computers"—at the CIA facility to know what actually happened regarding the alleged CIA search or the circumstances under which the committee came into possession of the Panetta internal review document.

Given that both of these matters have now been referred to the Department of Justice, it may take us a while before any accurate factual findings can be reached and a satisfactory resolution of these matters can be achieved. It may even call for a special investigator to be named to review the entire factual situation. Eventually, we will get to the bottom of this, but today I cannot make a statement that will reflect what actually occurred and therefore what recommendations we ought to make as we move forward.

Right now our committee members are conducting an internal assessment

of the facts and circumstances involved in both of these matters. This will be an ongoing process which should not be described or discussed in the public domain but, like all other intelligence committee matters, should remain within the purview of the confines of the intelligence committee.

Today I simply wanted everyone to know where I stand on this matter and how we need to get to the ground truth of these very important matters.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. CASEY are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, we know it is well past time—and that is an understatement—to take up the reauthorization of this important legislation, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, which has not been reauthorized since 1996. It is hard to comprehend that, but that is true.

In the nearly two decades since, our understanding of early childhood development and the importance of high-quality childcare in early learning has expanded dramatically. Investing in high-quality early learning opportunities, such as childcare and prekindergarten, sets children on the path to success.

I like to say if children learn more now, they will earn more later, and that is why there is a direct nexus with the quality of the childcare we provide. The quality of early learning connects directly with our economic growth.

Our gross domestic product—our future economic growth and success as a country—is substantially dependent on the quality of early learning and the quality of childcare. It is good we are focused in a bipartisan way on the childcare aspects of this challenge.

We must update the Federal standards that relate to childcare to ensure that the Federal Government is supporting high-quality childcare—not just any quality childcare—for low-income children.

The bill we are considering sets a new standard for childcare in America. It makes sure Federal dollars are going to providers who are committed to providing childcare that meets certain criteria, such as health and safety standards.

Many of these changes reflect proposals I put forth in previous Congresses to improve the child care and development block grant. The Starting Early Starting Right Act was legislation I introduced.

I am encouraged we are able to reach consensus on many of the provisions I supported in the past and that they are represented in this bill. I, and I know many others, would have liked to have gone further to provide more of an investment both by way of dollars and

more of an investment by way of quality, but these are significant changes and we should all support them.

In terms of the increase in incentives that I would hope we can do at a future date, I described them in this way: incentives for States to invest in quality ratings and improvement systems. We know a lot of acronyms. This is QRIS, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which encourages childcare providers to make continuous improvements in the care they provide and the facilities they use often through financial incentives, such as higher reimbursement rates, when a certain quality level is reached.

However, I still believe the bill we have in front of us represents a substantial and significant improvement over the current law. We owe our most vulnerable children nothing less.

For the first time we are requiring all States to develop a robust health and safety set of standards and to institute a consistent background check for childcare providers. We are requiring States to formally coordinate their early learning programs to improve service coordination and delivery. We are allowing children who qualify for a subsidy to receive 1 year of care before their eligibility is redetermined. This will help promote stability and continuity for the entire family and encourage the child to develop strong relationships with his or her teachers and peers in childcare.

Finally, we are increasing the investment in quality from the 4-percent quality set-aside per year—currently required in law—to 10-percent within 5 years, including a separate set-aside for infants and toddlers. Quality is a continuum and continual investment. It is not a one-time purchase. It is something we need to support and sustain.

This bill is about investing in our children's future and supporting working parents. I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting the CCBDBG reauthorization—a nice acronym for a long bill.

I mentioned earlier that if children get quality early care and learning, they will learn more now and earn more later when they are in the workforce. There is no question about that. All the studies indicate that. We know that. There is no disagreement about that.

We also have to recognize that there are so many families—somewhere in the millions—that have two parents working, and we know the stress and challenge that creates. In addition, we have just come through the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. Climbing out of that hole and having all of the economic pressures on these families, they are often also heavily burdened or even crushed by the cost of childcare.

We have an opportunity with this legislation to move forward and make needed changes on issues, such as health and safety standards and mak-

ing sure we are setting aside more dollars for infants and toddlers.

There are a whole range of actions we are taking, but we still have a ways to go to speak directly to the needs that working families have in terms of the cost of childcare and ensuring the kind of quality they have a right to expect.

Finally, on a related topic, we need to make sure we are making a national and substantial commitment to early learning. The President has talked about this issue. People from both parties and CEOs tell us about it all the time. We need to get together on these other issues even as we pass this bipartisan legislation.

I wish to commend the work of Senator HARKIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER, who are working to get this done, and the good work over several years now done by Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR.

We need to get this done and then get to work on some of the childcare and early learning challenges our country faces and families are often burdened with.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEVADA SESQUICENTENNIAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, throughout this year, my home State will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its path to Statehood, on October 31, 1864.

Next week, while I will be home visiting my family and constituents, the Battle Born State will celebrate the day that Congress passed and President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation paving the way for Nevada to become the 36th State. At that time Congress was in a rush to welcome Nevada into the Union. It was during the Civil War; it was raging.

The only other State admitted to the Union during the war was West Virginia, which seceded from Virginia to remain part of the Union in 1863.

Congress didn't want to wait until the next session to admit another new State—a new State that could swing the Presidential election in Lincoln's favor and provide crucial votes for the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery. Nevadans had already rejected one proposed State constitution, so there was no time to waste.

On March 21, 1864, in the waning hours of the 38th Congress, a law was passed allowing Nevada to enter the Union whenever voters finally passed and President Lincoln approved a State constitution.

It wasn't during the normal course of business, but this wasn't the normal course with the Civil War going on. Typically Congress would get the final word on admission of a new State to the Union.

But these, as I have indicated, were certainly not normal times. Even today we acknowledge Nevada's unique path to Statehood on our State flag with the words: "Battle Born."

Throughout this year, we will celebrate Nevada's 150th birthday with events in every corner of the State. From my hometown of Searchlight to Virginia City to Elko, there is a 150th anniversary event to match every interest.

Nevada is a very large State. Area wide it is the seventh largest in the country. It is a unique State with more mountains than any place other than Alaska. We have 314 separate mountain ranges. We have one mountain that is 14,000 feet high. We have 32 mountains over 11,000 feet high. We have wide-ranging land, and we have some of the coldest places in the Nation and some of the hottest places in the Nation.

We have all kinds of wildlife. Theodore Roosevelt created an antelope range that is large and sparsely populated. We have not only the antelope, we also have desert bighorn sheep. In Nevada we have mountain goats; we have almost 3 million acres of wilderness. It is a very beautiful State. It is more than the bright lights of Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe—even though we are very proud of sharing the stewardship of Lake Tahoe with the State of California—as Mark Twain said: "the fairest picture the whole earth affords."

We will mark Nevada's second constitutional convention, the day Nevada voters finally approved its constitution and the day, Halloween, October 31, 1864, that Lincoln proclaimed Nevada's Statehood. The 150th anniversary of our admission to the Union provides a wonderful opportunity to study Nevada's history. It is also the birthday of my young brother, so it is easy to remember—admission day, Halloween, and my brother's birthday all occurred the same day.

It is also a chance to reflect on Nevada's unique pioneer spirit—a spirit that continues to make our State very special.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I rise to recognize the great State of Nevada, as we celebrate 150 years of statehood. It is a remarkable opportunity to speak on the floor of this Chamber about this milestone, given the role the Congress played in the formation of the Silver State. The movement to make the Nevada Territory a State began within the territory, but the first attempt to formulate a Constitution failed.

Shortly after, the 38th Congress passed an enabling act for Nevada statehood. Signed by President Abraham Lincoln on March 21, 1864, this bill